

## **WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP CRITICAL AREAS**

### **Critical Area 1**

**Location:** 86<sup>th</sup> Street between Meridian Street and College Avenue.

**Why critical:** This portion of 86<sup>th</sup> Street is primarily residential in nature, and includes two churches in the area. The residential areas are under development pressure from commercial expansion. If commercial development were allowed on any of these parcels, several more parcels on 86<sup>th</sup> Street could be in line to convert to commercial development as well. It is critical to protect the existing residential nature of this portion of 86<sup>th</sup> Street from any commercial development encroachment.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Restrict commercial development from this portion of 86<sup>th</sup> Street and its cross streets as shown on the plan.
- Any new development should be sensitive to the existing high water table, and lack of adequate drainage. No new development should occur without sewer hookups that include additional capacity to allow surrounding properties to hook up. Storm water runoff should be controlled by the use of retention or detention ponds where applicable.
- If the church at 8600 North College Avenue relocates and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site should be developed as a park if feasible. If a park is not feasible, the residential housing in the density of 3.5 to 5.0 units per acre should be developed with some land set aside for open space. There is a critical need for parkland in this area. Commercial development should not occur on this site.
- The Land Use recommendation for the southeast corner of 86<sup>th</sup> and Meridian Streets is residential development greater than 5.00 and equal to or less than 8.00 units per acre. The preferred form of this land use recommendation is condominiums. Should this site be developed according to this land use recommendation, it should conform to the following:
  - It is recommended that all twelve parcels be developed in a compatible way, as one project if possible, and avoid piecemeal development.
  - Design of the buildings on site should be respectful of, and in character with, the quality of nearby residential structures. This includes building height, setback requirements, enclosed attached parking, drainage, location of services, low level signage, and lighting contained on site.
  - Conservation of the surrounding trees and the trees on the Meridian Street and 86<sup>th</sup> Street frontages is of particular importance. These should be adapted into any future development plans for the site, whether as one development, or as parcels are developed individually. Large, native trees are of special concern.
  - Sidewalks should be provided.
  - All parcels should share a single exit/entrance on 86<sup>th</sup> Street, and a single exit/entrance on Meridian Street.
  - Residences should face outward, towards Meridian Street and 86<sup>th</sup> Street with vehicular access to the rear.

## **Critical Area 2**

**Location:** North side of 86<sup>th</sup> Street between Cholla Road and Keystone Avenue.

**Why critical:** The north side of 86<sup>th</sup> Street is primarily residential in nature. The residential areas are under development pressure from commercial expansion. There is no significant barrier west of Keystone Avenue to stop the process of commercial encroachment on 86<sup>th</sup> Street. If commercial development were allowed on any of these parcels, several more parcels on 86<sup>th</sup> Street could be in line to convert to commercial development as well. It is critical to protect the existing residential nature of this portion of 86<sup>th</sup> Street from any commercial development

### **Recommendations:**

- Restrict retail and office development to the south of 86<sup>th</sup> Street, and east of Woodfield Crossing Boulevard as shown on map.
- Retail and office development should not encroach upon areas of existing or planned residential development.
- If the church at 2720 East 86<sup>th</sup> street relocates and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site should be developed as residential housing in the density of 3.5 to 5.0 units per acre. Commercial development should not occur on this site.
- The Land Use recommendation for the northeast corner of 86<sup>th</sup> Street and Haverstick Road is residential development greater than 8.00 and equal to or less than 15.00 units per acre. The preferred form of this land use recommendation is multi-family units. Should this site be developed according to this land use recommendation, it should conform to the following:
  - It is recommended that all five parcels be developed in a compatible way, as one project if possible, and avoid piecemeal development.
  - Design of the buildings on site should be respectful of, and in character with, the quality of nearby residential structures. This includes building height, setback requirements, enclosed attached parking, drainage, location of services, low level signage, and lighting contained on site.
  - Have exit/entrances only on Haverstick Road that line up with the exit/entrances of the church to the west.
  - All parcels should share these exit/entrances whether as one project development or as piecemeal development.
  - Conservation of the surrounding trees is of particular importance. These should be adapted into any future development plans for the site, whether as one development, or as parcels are developed individually.
  - In some places steep slopes greater than 10% exist. These slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, so that they may retain any forest cover and avoid soil erosion.

### **Critical Area 3**

#### **Location: Sycamore Springs area**

**Why critical:** Sycamore Springs was developed as a mixed-use neighborhood where the various parts are well integrated and easily walkable. To maintain Sycamore Spring's identity as a distinct place, it has been designated as Village Mixed Use. To retain and enhance the mixed-use character of Sycamore Springs, it is critical to protect the current development patterns (mix of land uses; and the size, shape, and location of buildings on their sites). Residents have potentially good connectivity to neighborhood retailing, office-oriented businesses, and recreational opportunities.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Do not allow any further retail or office development to occur on the west side of Dean Road.
- Future development within the critical area should reflect the existing pattern of streets and lots.
- Pedestrian connectivity should be strengthened throughout the critical area by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks, paths, and safe street crossings.
- Continue to follow the development guidelines set by the Sycamore Springs Development Group.

### **Critical Area 4**

**Location:** Allisonville Road between 77<sup>th</sup> Street and 82<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**Why critical:** This portion of Allisonville Road is primarily residential in nature, including three churches in the area. The residential areas are under development pressure from commercial expansion. There is no significant barrier south of 82<sup>nd</sup> Street to stop the process of commercial encroachment on Allisonville Road. If commercial development were allowed on any of these parcels, several more parcels on Allisonville Road could be in line to convert to commercial development as well. It is critical to protect the existing residential nature of this portion of Allisonville Road from any commercial development encroachment.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Restrict commercial retail development from this portion of Allisonville Road.
- If the church at 7900 Allisonville Road relocates, and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site should be developed as residential housing in the density of 1.75 to 3.5 units per acre. Commercial development should not occur on this site.
- If the church at 5233 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street relocates, and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site should be developed as residential housing in the density of 0 to 1.75 units per acre. Commercial development should not occur on this site.
- If the church at 7848 Allisonville Road relocates, and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site relocates, their existing site on Allisonville Road should be developed

as residential housing in the density of 1.75 to 3.5 units per acre. Commercial development should not occur on this site.

- If the church at 7701 Allisonville Road relocates and the site is not occupied by another Special Use, this site should be developed as residential housing in the density of 0 to 1.75 units per acre. Commercial development should not occur on this site.
- If 8145 North Allisonville Road is not maintained as a residential property, then it should be developed as an office property in tandem with 8151 North Allisonville Road, to act as a buffer between the commercial to the north and the residential to the south. Commercial retail development should not be allowed to occur on either of these parcels.
- Any new office development should be integrated, well buffered from the neighboring residences, use only low level signage, and shield lighting to avoid spillage onto neighboring properties, and share the same entrance/exit onto Allisonville Road.
- In some places steep slopes greater than 10% exist. These slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, so that they may retain their forest cover and avoid soil erosion.
- Conservation of existing trees is of particular importance. These should be adapted into any future development plans.

## **Critical Area 5**

**Location:** Keystone Avenue from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street to Howland Ditch

**Why critical:** Despite heavy traffic counts, the west side of Keystone Avenue is solidly residential through this stretch. Two stretches of single-family residential properties can also found along the east side of the street. It is critical to the stability of the surrounding neighborhoods that these areas remain residential. Recently property at 1616 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street was donated to the City to create Stamm Park. Indy Parks has also entered into a long-term lease arrangement to redevelop the form White River Elementary School (7201 Crittenden Avenue) as a park (probably requiring at least partial demolition of the school structure). Despite these acquisitions, by the standards of the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation, Washington Township is in need of significantly more park acreage to adequately serve the population. Howland Ditch and its immediate surroundings are environmentally sensitive. Environmental factors include floodway, the 100-year floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes and high quality woodlands.

### **Recommendations:**

- To protect the surrounding residential neighborhoods, restrict non-residential development as shown on map. Any conversion of these homes could set a precedent that may set off a chain reaction of further conversions.
- For reasons of flood control, conservation of natural qualities and the need for more recreation opportunities in Washington Township, it is critical that future reuse of the Knights of Columbus property (2100 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street) and other properties along Howland Creek be as a public park as shown on the Land Use Map..
- Conservation of the surrounding trees is of particular importance. These should be adapted into any future development plans for the site, whether as one development, or as parcels are developed individually.

- Support the continuing viability of the homes along Keystone Avenue through code enforcement and programs aimed at housing stability.

### **Critical Area 6**

**Location:** Keystone Avenue and Kessler Boulevard

**Why critical:** The row of homes that faced Glendale Mall and Merle Sidener Middle School from across Keystone Avenue have nearly all been converted to office uses. However homes on Keystone Avenue to the south and on Kessler Boulevard are still intact. Many neighborhood destinations in this area such as the mall, middle school and other retail and job centers are not easy for pedestrians to access despite sidewalks along the major streets; in particular, the width of Keystone Avenue makes safe pedestrian crossing difficult.

#### **Recommendations:**

- To protect the surrounding residential neighborhoods, restrict non-residential development to the lots that face Keystone Avenue north of Kessler Boulevard as shown on map. Lots facing Kessler Boulevard or facing Keystone Avenue south of Kessler Boulevard should remain in residential use. Any conversion of these homes could set a precedent that may set off a chain reaction of further conversions. The southwest corner of Keystone Avenue and Kessler Boulevard in part of the Keystone Kessler Neighborhood Plan. This plan acknowledges the existing commercial use on the corner but recommends no further conversion of residential use to commercial use on either street.
- A safe mid-block crossing of Keystone Avenue at Glendale Mall is recommended.
- Merle Sidener Middle School has been indexed to provide guidance in determining a new land use for the site in case it stops functioning as a school or similar use. The northern portion of the site has been indexed to Regional Commercial to tie into Glendale Mall. The southern portion of the site is recommended as Office Commercial to provide a buffer between the mall and the neighborhood to the south. Any retail use, particularly one with drive-through service, would not provide for an appropriate transition between the mall and the residential area across the street.

### **Critical Area 7**

**Location:** 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and Allisonville Road

**Why critical:** The intersection of 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and Allisonville Road is an established commercial node that serves the solid and stable residential neighborhoods around it. Despite a number of neighborhood destinations such as shopping and Eastwood Middle School, few sidewalks exist in the area. The Indiana Transportation Authority rail line, which intersects Allisonville Road within this critical area, is under study as a potential rapid transit corridor linking Fishers and the northern portions of Marion County with Downtown Indianapolis and a region wide rapid transit network. It is possible that this area (as a major intersection and commercial node) could be the location of a transit stop or station. Although conjectural at this point it is critical to consider the land use implications of the potential stop. By the standards of the Indianapolis Department of

Parks and Recreation, Washington Township is in need of significantly more park acreage to adequately serve the population.

**Recommendations:**

- To protect the surrounding residential neighborhoods, restrict community commercial development to immediate corners of the intersection of Allisonville Road and 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and along the north side of 62<sup>nd</sup> Street between the rail line and the Williamsburg North Apartments as shown on map. The only conversion of houses to businesses recommended in this critical area is an isolated group of three houses on the south side of 62<sup>nd</sup> Street sandwiched between the Villa Paree Apartments and Eastwood Middle School. Conversion of these properties to office use should not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding neighborhoods. These houses should be redeveloped as an integrated development to reduce the number of openings onto 62<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Pedestrian connectivity should be strengthened throughout the critical area by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks and safe street crossings. However construction of sidewalks should avoid healthy mature trees.
- Large expanses of parking should be broken up with landscaping.
- Should the Indiana Transportation Authority rail line be developed as a rapid transit line with a stop or station in this area, intensification of the commercial node may be expected, however the area of the commercial zone should not expand into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- If the property located at 4141 East 62nd Street is to become a park, then any recreational development should be designed to minimize any negative impact on the adjacent property owners. If the property is unable to become a park, then the site should be developed as residential housing in the density of 0-1.75 units per acre. High-density residential or commercial land uses would be inappropriate on this site.
- The wooded areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive should be preserved to the extent possible. This is especially true of the wooded area on the west side of Allisonville Road that separates and buffers the retail center and the residential properties to the north.

**Critical Area 8**

**Location:** The vicinity of 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Emerson Way.

**Why critical:** This area is a commercial node that serves the surrounding neighborhoods and is the crossroads of several major streets and the Fall Creek Greenway. The commercial uses in this area were not developed in a coordinated manner and do not physically relate well to each other. Remnants of the historic town of Millersville still exist in this area.

**Recommendations:**

- This area has been designated as Village Mixed Use to encourage future development in the area to occur in ways that are more coordinated, physically connected to the community and pedestrian friendly. Any major redevelopment of the area should be based on a “Main Street” or “Village Square” prototype.
- Retain the historic structures in the area. These occur along Millersville Road and on the northwest corner of Emerson Way and Kessler Boulevard.
- Pedestrian connectivity should be strengthened throughout the critical area by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks, safe street crossings and connections to the existing Fall Creek Greenway Trail. New development or redevelopment of commercial properties should include clear, safe access for pedestrians. Drive-through only establishments would not be appropriate for this pedestrian oriented area.
- Expand the greenway trail upstream as shown in the Indianapolis Greenways Master Plan and the Marion County Bicycle Plan.
- Large expanses of parking should be broken up with landscaping.
- The wooded areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive should be preserved to the extent possible.

## **Critical Area 9**

**Location:** Westfield Boulevard from 79<sup>th</sup> Street to Oxbow Way

**Why Critical:** The eastside of Westfield Boulevard is predominantly residential with a few parcels of commercial uses between Helen Drive to the north and 74<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. North of 75<sup>th</sup> Street, both sides of Westfield Boulevard are residential. There is some pressure along Westfield Boulevard and throughout the Critical Area to convert existing single-family residential properties to commercial uses or higher intensity residential uses. Contributing factors are the heavy use of the Monon trail, heavy traffic on Westfield Boulevard and expansion of commercial and higher intensity residential land uses from the south out of Broad Ripple. Demolition of multiple, adjacent, existing single-family properties would have a destabilizing effect on the character of the neighborhood. It is critical to protect the residential areas between the Monon Rail-Trail and the river and to avoid the incremental increase of office and commercial uses along Westfield Boulevard.

The significant amount of natural open space and wildlife habitat which remains along the White River and within Marrott Park also contribute to this area’s unique character. A considerable amount of woodland, steep slopes and the 100-year floodplain make it critical that development in this area be sensitive to the environment. Park recommendation in the lower portion of the area has potential to provide good canoe access to the White River. It is critical to provide adequate parkland for existing and future population.

## **Recommendations:**

- Limit expansion of the non-residential uses that exist near 75<sup>th</sup> Street and Westfield Boulevard as shown on map. Commercial and industrial development should not encroach upon areas of existing or planned residential development.
- Develop the vacant parcel in the southern portion of this area as a park as shown on map.

- Intensification of housing densities should not occur within the 100-year floodplain.
- Preserve areas in the floodway as conservation areas. Dense vegetative cover along stream banks is important for erosion control, contamination capture, water cooling (critical for retaining oxygen levels) and habitat preservation.
- The wooded areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive should be preserved.

## **Critical Area 10**

**Location:** Crooked Creek from Township Line Road downstream to 38<sup>th</sup> Street (note: this Critical Area is in two sections because it is bisected by the Michigan Road Corridor Plan study area)

**Why critical:** Development along Crooked Creek reveals a history of varying attitudes towards the stream and its environmental qualities and conflict between rural and suburban development patterns. It is critical that the opportunities provided by the scattered undeveloped or underdeveloped properties along the stream are used to maintain and enhance the environmental qualities of the stream corridor while providing for quality development and better connectivity among the neighborhoods along the creek. Some of the environmental considerations that are particularly notable along Crooked Creek are flooding, streambank erosion and its scientifically documented high level of biodiversity for an urban stream.\* By the standards of the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation, Washington Township is in need of significantly more park acreage to adequately serve the population.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop the Crooked Creek Corridor as a greenway as shown in the Indianapolis Greenways Master Plan.
- Expand upon the Greenways Plan by developing a series of creekside parks as shown on map (expansion of WISH Park, Lienert property, Grandview Stables site and expansion of Fox Hill Manor Park) and including a proposed community/open space at 5555 Michigan Road, a parcel within the boundaries of the Michigan Road Corridor Plan study area.
- Recreation development in the proposed parks should be designed in a way to minimize any negative impacts on the adjacent property owners.
- Pedestrian connectivity should be strengthened throughout the critical area by the construction and upkeep of sidewalks, safe street crossings and connections to the existing and proposed parks along the Crooked Creek Greenway.
- The wooded areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive should be preserved to the extent possible.
- In places steep slopes define the stream valley. These slopes should be minimally developed, if at all, so that they retain their forest cover and avoid erosion.
- Any development in proximity to the stream that worsens streambank erosion should be avoided.
- Development in proximity to the stream should not contribute to flooding or diminished water quality. Development should strive to mitigate existing flooding, drainage and water quality problems.



- Develop a bike lane along Westlane Road as recommended in the Marion County Bicycle Plan.

\*

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